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Letter dated 5 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

It gives me great pleasure to forward herewith the memorandum of the Government of Mongolia on the measures taken by Mongolia to implement the Millennium Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 55/2).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 29.

(*Signed*) J. **Enkhsaikhan**
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Annex to the letter dated 5 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Memorandum on implementation of the Millennium Declaration: Mongolia's policy measures

At the turn of the new century the world leaders reiterated in the Millennium Declaration their common vision for a prosperous, peaceful and just world, and have set specific goals to materialize the vision. The Government of Mongolia is fully determined to attain the goals of the Millennium Declaration at the national level and has been taking concrete steps to that end. Thus having made a comprehensive review of the status of its mid-and-long-term goals and commitments undertaken in 1990s as a follow-up to the United Nations summits and conferences, my Government is now making the necessary adjustments in its policy and programs to meet the time-bound millennium development goals. In this regard, Mongolia highly commends an integrated and comprehensive approach outlined by the Secretary-General in the Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

Mongolia's policy measures towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration have been drawn from the discussions and recommendations of a joint conference organized by the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations under the theme "40 years of Mongolia-United Nations cooperation: Implementation of the Millennium Declaration" on 3 September 2001 in Ulaanbaatar on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Mongolia's admission to the United Nations.

The Constitution of Mongolia, adopted in 1992, is reflective of the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance and respect for nature outlined in the Millennium Declaration through setting out the following as the basic goals of the country and the society: strengthening the independence and sovereignty of the nation; cherishing human rights and freedoms, justice and national unity; inheriting the traditions of national statehood, history and culture; respecting the accomplishments of human civilization; and aspiring toward the supreme objective of building a humane, civil and democratic society. Furthermore, the principle of shared responsibility has found reflection in the basic concepts of national security and foreign policy adopted back in 1994.

Over the past decade the consecutive governments of Mongolia have endeavoured to promote these goals by mobilizing domestic resources, including human resources, as well as drawing on the external experience and assistance of the international community. As a result, the political reforms have progressed quite quickly and smoothly, with the basic institutions of representative democracy in place and further consolidated with each passing year.

As to economic reforms, significant headway has been made in fostering a market economy, achieving macro-economic stability, advancing privatization and improving the infrastructure. However, much still needs to be done. In addition to its difficulties associated with transition the singular land-locked location and ecological conditions pose

a most fundamental challenge to Mongolia's economic security thus making her a prime case of economic vulnerability. Maximizing the external and internal factors conducive to Mongolia's economic development has therefore been an overriding priority of Mongolia's national security strategy from the start of transition in the early 1990s.

In pursuing its foreign policy based on the continuity of a multi-pillar, open and pro-active policy, Mongolia will continue to develop and expand its friendly and beneficial relations with other countries, and to strive to gradually integrate its economy into regional cooperative arrangements and multilateral trading system.

Mindful of the shared responsibility for promoting international peace, security and development, Mongolia is trying to play a supportive role in the common endeavors of the international community and take an active part in areas where it could contribute.

In the area of peace, security and disarmament, Mongolia has throughout supported the policies and actions to strengthen peace and security, promote peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes, and take effective measures to prevent wars and armed conflicts. It supports progressive development of international law and strengthening respect for the rule of law in international relations. On Mongolia's proposal in 1998, within the United Nations Decade of International Law, the General Assembly adopted the Principles and Guidelines for International Negotiations[1], underlining that international negotiations constitute a flexible and effective means for, among other things, the peaceful settlement of disputes among States and for the creation of new international norms of conduct. The General Assembly specifically underlined that identification of these principles and guidelines could "contribute to enhancing the predictability of negotiating parties, reducing uncertainty and promoting an atmosphere of trust at negotiations".

Mongolia is party to over 140 international treaties and conventions, including most multilateral treaties dealing with disarmament, protection of the environment and human rights. Mongolia was among the first to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and has offered its three stations for the use of the International Monitoring System to monitor the Treaty's implementation. Mongolia strongly supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world as measures contributing to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons, and has declared in 1992 its own territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Over the last few years it has been working with the States concerned to institutionalize that status[2] as its contribution to making a territory almost of the size of Western Europe into a zone of peace, predictability and stability. Mongolia fully supports the elaboration of a protocol for verification of compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons.

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[1] See General Assembly resolution 53/101 of 8 December 1998.

[2] See General Assembly resolutions 53/77 D of 4 December 1998 and 55/33 S of 20 November 2000.

Mongolia has signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and is in the process of ratifying it. To further strengthen international legality, Mongolia supports convening at an appropriate time of an international conference of plenipotentiaries to consider the draft articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts with a view to adopting them as part of conventional international law.

Mongolia is party to 9 international conventions aimed at combating specific manifestations of international terrorism.[3] Mongolia shall sign the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism during this session of the General Assembly. It supports the speediest conclusion of an international convention against nuclear terrorism as well as a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as concrete legal means to fight terrorism. Bearing in mind the increasing threat of international terrorism in the wake of the tragic events of 11 September, the Government of Mongolia has proposed to convene a special session of the General Assembly to develop a comprehensive strategy to uproot international terrorism through global and concerted action.

The Millennium Declaration called for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Mongolia fully supports and advocates such cooperation. Being part of the Northeast Asia region, the only sub-region that lacks a mechanism at the governmental level where security issues of concern could be discussed collectively, Mongolia proposed in 2000 to start exploring the possibility of engaging in a dialogue on such a mechanism by exchanging views on its possible framework.

Mongolia has always supported peace-keeping operations as one of the important means of maintaining international peace and security. Since mid-1990s Mongolia has taken deliberate steps and made measurable progress in developing its peacekeeping capability through, inter alia, establishing a Peacekeeping Directorate at the General Staff of the Armed Forces as a focal point for training of peace-keepers and developing its peacekeeping doctrine. Aside from a national seminar on PKOs held in 1999 with the assistance of DPKO of the United Nations, Mongolian nationals have been actively participating in regional and international training courses to develop a multinational peacekeeping approach. Over the last few years despite its financial constraints Mongolia has been able to fully pay all its dues related to peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, willing to contribute to the United Nations peacekeeping missions through its direct participation, Mongolia signed with the United Nations in 1999 a memorandum of understanding on standby arrangements to provide staff officers, military observers and medical officers. Mongolia stands ready to actively cooperate with the United Nations and make a practical contribution to its peacekeeping operations.

[3] Since Mongolia is land-locked and has no fleet, it has not acceded to the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigations and to the 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf.

In the past years Mongolia has been an active participant in international activities aimed at strengthening institutions and processes of democratic governance, protecting human rights and promoting democratic consolidation. Mongolia's overall accomplishments in embracing democracy and human rights have been impressive. The 1992 Constitution guarantees the fundamental freedoms and human rights. Mongolia is party to all major international human rights instruments. During the 56th session of the General Assembly Mongolia intends to sign the two optional protocols to Convention on the Rights of the Child. Earlier this year Mongolia has set up an independent National Human Rights Commission to protect human rights of its citizens. Since 1990 Mongolia successfully held four parliamentary and three presidential elections all being free and fair. The major task now is consolidation of democracy and the rule law, particularly through strengthening an independent judiciary, fighting corruption and ensuring fuller gender equality. Sustainability of political reforms, however, to a great extent depends on the success of economic reforms to deliver the promise of democracy. Willing to share its fresh experience of peaceful and simultaneous transition to democracy and a market-oriented economy over the last decade, Mongolia has offered to host the fifth international conference of new and restored democracies in 2003 in Ulaanbaatar.

Since 1990 Mongolia's transition from the centrally planned economy to a market one has been by and large successful with over 70 percent of the GDP being produced today by the private sector. On the other hand, this period has proved to be painful in socio-economic terms. The transition period has entailed considerable hardships, especially in the sphere of human development.

Due to heavy dependence of the economy on a few export commodities, Mongolia's economy remains highly vulnerable to external shocks and harsh terms of trade. Trade represents an important engine of growth and a means of developing cooperation among nations. However, due to their geographical location, the land-locked countries find themselves structurally disadvantaged to equally benefit from trade liberalization. It is for this reason the Millennium Declaration recognized the special needs and problems of the 30 land-locked developing countries (LLDCs), half of which are also the least developed countries. High transit costs of their exports and imports negate whatever comparative advantage they could have in world trade. Therefore, Mongolia, jointly with other LLDCs, is endeavoring to draw the international community's attention to the problems of this group of countries so as to collectively address them. In this regard, Mongolia places high hopes on the international ministerial meeting on transit transport cooperation scheduled for 2003 in Kazakhstan.

Since May 2000 three meetings of trilateral negotiations on draft Transit Traffic Framework Agreement between Mongolia, the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have been held with the support of the relevant UN agencies. In this regard, Mongolia appreciates the active participation and continued efforts of its neighbors towards a successful conclusion of the trilateral agreement aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the transit transport system.

Given the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) for development, like other countries, Mongolia is making every effort to take full advantage of the ICT revolution. Since mid-1990s Mongolia has been encouraging introduction of ICT, especially computer education and wider use of internet. In 2000 the Government adopted a national strategy of ICT development with a view to swiftly promoting ICT and providing access to the population living in remote areas. Mongolia believes that the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in 2003 under the auspices of the International Telecommunications Union, should play an important role in identifying the concrete ways and means of narrowing the ever increasing digital divide in the world as well as ensuring that the benefits of new technologies are made available to all.

Mongolia fully supports the concept of human security, seeing in it potentials of promoting sustainable human development. Thus one month after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the Government approved a national program on "Good Governance for Human Security" (GGHS) facilitating policy focus, coherence and sustainability of the overall development strategy, including poverty reduction. Furthermore, in June 2001, the Government has adopted an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), which is expected to develop into a full strategy in 2002. This strategy would focus on directing the benefits from the private-sector-led economic growth to social development and delivering improved services to the population.

Poverty is one of the critical issues that Mongolia faces today. Thirty six percent of the population lives in poverty - a phenomenon that, unfortunately, accompanied the process of transition. The Government of Mongolia implemented the 1994-2000 National Poverty Alleviation Program (NPAP) with the support of the international community. The primary goal of the NPAP was to halt the growing tendency of poverty in the country. To that end more than 13.000 small scale projects have been undertaken with active participation of the civil society. The national survey conducted in 2000 has shown that the level of poverty has not increased despite the continued economic hardships.

In accordance with the present poverty reduction strategy, which is harmonized with and supported by broad-based, people-oriented and labor-intensive growth strategies, the Government of Mongolia is aiming to reduce by year 2005 the number of people living in extreme poverty by at least 25 percent, and halve it by year 2015 as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration.

The impressive achievements in education and health sectors, reached prior to 1990, have been under constant pressure of unraveling during the transition period. Though in 1989, 1.5 percent of children aged 8-15 were illiterate, in 2000 illiteracy rate among that category of children increased almost three fold. Number of school drop-outs, especially in rural areas, has increased. Provision of herdsmen's children with dormitory/boarding facilities also remains a major concern. The education sector reform is underway to address the challenges of this crucial component of development and, despite the difficulties, the Government set the goal to achieve universal primary education by year 2005.

As the humankind enters the new millennium with the hope for harnessing the great potential of new technologies, new ideas and unprecedented wealth, billions of people are not able to participate fully in the development processes, while hundreds of millions do not have access to their basic right – the right to education. Mongolia fully associates itself with the growing consensus that renewed efforts should be made to eradicate illiteracy. In this regard, Mongolia underlines the importance of launching the United Nations Literacy Decade to be proclaimed by this session of the General Assembly to give further impetus to the commitments taken by the international community at the Dakar World Education Forum and the Millennium Summit.

Maternal and child mortality rates are still high. In 1990-1999 infant and under-five mortality rates have decreased by more than 40 percent. Maternal mortality ratio in 1996-1999 per 100,000 live births were on average 121 in the capital city and 175 in rural Mongolia. This remains one of three main concerns in the health sector along with high rate of infectious diseases and epidemiological death causes. These concerns are closely related to inefficiency and fragmentation of the health care financing.

The main challenge of the health sector is to improve accessibility and quality of health services, efficiently targeting the poor and vulnerable, especially in remote regions. Through the effective implementation of the Health Sector Master Plan, the Government is committed to meet the Millennium Declaration goals to reduce the mortality rates for infants and children by half.

The increasing recurrence and increase in the scale of natural disasters such as forest fires, droughts and "dzuds" (severe winters) in recent years have had heavy social, economic and environmental consequences for Mongolia. Heavy losses in economic terms have sapped the national budget and seriously affected the GDP growth rates over the last two years. The Government is working to improve the country's national disaster management capacity and find long-term solutions to predict and minimize the effects of natural disasters.

The world leaders at the Millennium Summit have declared to promote gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways to promote social justice, combat poverty, hunger and disease, and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable. According to some estimates, out of the total female population over 1.9 billion live in rural areas. Over the past two decades, the number of rural women living in absolute poverty has risen by 50 percent, as opposed to 30 percent for men. Therefore efforts of the international community, in our view, need to be reinvigorated towards improving the situation of women in rural areas. In this context, the conclusions and recommendations of the UN expert group meeting on "The situation of rural women within the context of globalization", hosted by the Government of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar last June should be given serious consideration.

Impact of global warming, land degradation and desertification on the environment, economy and way of life have notably been mounting. As a country highly vulnerable to environmental degradation, Mongolia attaches great importance to the implementation of the relevant international conventions. As party to all the major environmental conventions, including the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mongolia has adopted a package of 25 environmental laws and 20 national programs to implement them. In 1998, Mongolia launched its national sustainable development agenda for the 21st century up to the year 2020, known as MAP-21 (Mongolian Action Program for the 21st century) as a follow up to the Rio Summit.

Mongolia stands resolved to fully implement the Millennium Declaration goals. Domestic resources to meet these goals are limited, especially in light of growing concerns for world economic downturn exacerbated by the terrorist attacks of 11 September. However, we have no doubt that the continued support and assistance of the international community - both our bilateral and multilateral development partners - will remain crucial in our efforts to achieve the Millennium Declaration goals. Furthermore, Mongolia believes that the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development will provide fresh impetus to the attainment of these goals.

Mongolia has taken first steps towards implementing the goals of the Millennium Declaration. It believes that with political will and resources, the noble goals of the Declaration are attainable. Spirit of partnership and shared responsibility that has shaped the Millennium Declaration are also essential to translate the vision into reality. To this end Mongolia is prepared to closely cooperate with the UN family organizations, its fellow members and international financial and economic institutions.